

Report of the Medical Officer of Health
for the
Municipal Borough of Wilton
for the
Year Ending December 31, 1919.

GENTLEMEN,

I have the honour to submit to you a report on the conditions in your district in 1919.

May I hope that you will remember that I have only recently been appointed to the office of Medical Officer of Health and that I have to report on matters about which I have had some difficulty in getting information.

NATURAL AND SOCIAL CONDITIONS.

The Population at the Census in 1911 was 2200.

The Official Estimate for the Birth rate is 2352.

and for the Death rate 2258.

Wilton is a small town situated at the junction of the valleys of the Wylde and of the Nadder and is, for the greater part, built on very low lying ground shut in by hills. As a result of this the climate is damp and relaxing. Catarrhal complaints and rheumatism, with the crippling effects on the heart which result from it, are extremely prevalent.

Manufactories of carpets, felt, and whiting are carried on in the district. No deleterious effect on the public health has been found associated with any of these industries and the health of the workers in all of them is generally good.

Vital Statistics :—

Number of legitimate Births :—Male 22, Female 21
 „ illegitimate „ „ 2 „ 4
 Total Births „ 24 „ 25
 Birth rate per 1,000, 20·8. For England and Wales 18·5.
 Total Deaths, Male 22, Female 15. Rate per 1,000, 16·3.
 Rate for England and Wales, 13·8.
 Average Age at Death, 48·5.
 Deaths of Infants under 1 year, 4. Rate per 1,000
 Births, 81·6. Rate for England and Wales, 89.

The number of cases of pauper sickness attended during the year was 20.

Poor Law Relief was paid to the amount of £130 6s.

Gratuitous medical relief is obtainable at the Salisbury Infirmary and is chiefly made use of by persons requiring operative and other hospital treatment.

SANITARY CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE DISTRICT.

*Water :—*The Town Water Supply, though hard, is excellent in quality and sufficient in quantity. The supply is constant from a reservoir to which the water is pumped from the waterworks. The situation of the reservoir is not high enough to maintain a constant supply in certain houses in the town, so that for some hours each day the water is pumped direct into the mains.

The supply is drawn from springs in Water Ditchampton, free from possibilities of contamination, and the water is not of a plumbo-solvent nature. No action with regard to any contamination has had to be taken during the year.

*Rivers and Streams :—*No complaint has been made of any pollution in the rivers or streams, but they have been getting choked and should be cleansed periodically.

Work on this matter was undertaken during the year.

*Drainage and Sewerage :—*The Sewage is disposed of to the Rural District Council's sewerage scheme for Bemerton and dealt with by that council. There were several cases of leakage of water into the sewers during the year which were dealt with.

The surface water is carried off by a different system of pipes and is delivered into the river Nadder at Quidhampton.

Closet Accommodation:—There are in the district 5 pail closets and 500 water closets. There are no privies.

Scavenging:—House refuse is collected weekly in open carts and removed to a tip. The earth closets are emptied and cleaned by the occupiers of the houses with which they are associated.

About 50 fixed receptacles for refuse remain. The substitution of ashbins with proper coverings has been started.

Sanitary Inspection of the district:—Owing to the departure of the Sanitary Inspector who held office last year very little information has been obtainable.

He made 240 inspections, served 6 informal notices, which were complied with, and no statutory notices.

There were no nuisances in hand at the close of 1918, at the close of 1919 there were 12.

12 nuisances were reported and 6 abated during 1919.

There were no summonses or other legal proceedings.

There are no Common lodging houses, Canal boats, Knackers' yards, or Offensive trades in the district.

There is no need for regulations in respect of underground sleeping rooms.

Schools:—The sanitary condition and water supply of the schools was sufficient and no action was required to be taken in relation to the health of the scholars, or for the prevention of the spread of infectious disease.

FOOD.

Milk Supply:—There has been no complaint during the year about the wholesomeness of the milk. The supply has been adequate and the methods of distribution efficient. The cowsheds in the district were inspected by the sanitary inspector who found the general condition good and there was no necessity for any action being taken under the Dairies, Cowsheds, and Milkshops Orders. No tuberculous cows were notified by the Police during the year.

Milk (Mothers and Children) Order, 1918:—No action was required under this order during the year.

Other Foods :—There has been no complaint recorded of any unsound food. Food inspection is controlled by the County Authorities and no measures have had to be taken as to the sanitary condition of premises used for the preparation, storage, or sale of food.

There is no public abattoir in the district, and no record of any carcasses, or parts of carcasses, condemned for tuberculosis.

PREVALENCE AND CONTROL OVER INFECTIOUS DISEASES.

Infectious Diseases Generally :—During the year 5 cases of Diphtheria, 1 of Ophthalmia Neonatorum, 1 of Erysipelas, 1 of Measles, 4 of German Measles and 4 of Pulmonary Tuberculosis were notified.

There was no particular epidemic and no noteworthy facts as to the source or spread of infection were recorded.

As the Diphtheria patients are removed to the Isolation Hospital as soon as possible after diagnosis there has been no arrangement made for the use of Diphtheria anti-toxin. There were no cases of Encephalitis Lethargica, and no return cases of Scarlet Fever during the year, nor any notification in regard to any of the diseases notifiable under the regulations of 7th January, 1919.

Arrangements are made for the use of bacteriological aids to diagnosis by means of swabs examined by the Clinical Research Association.

Most cases of Scarlet Fever and Diphtheria are sent to the Joint Districts Isolation Hospital, and the rooms occupied are disinfected as soon as possible after removal. A few cases remain in their own houses when arrangements can be made for satisfactory isolation, and the houses are disinfected on the recovery of the patients.

No information has been found with regard to non-notifiable infectious diseases during the year. Influenza was prevalent in the early months of the year, but during the year there were no deaths from that cause.

Tuberculosis is notified as soon as diagnosed and doubtful cases are sent to the County Tuberculosis Officer's Dispensary at Salisbury for his opinion and advice.

Small Pox:— No vaccinations were performed during the year by the Medical Officer of Health under the Public Health (Small-pox Prevention) Regulations 1917.

SANITARY ADMINISTRATION.

Staff :—This consists of a Sanitary Inspector who is also Surveyor and Inspector of Nuisances.

Hospital Accommodation available for Infectious Diseases : This is provided at The Joint Isolation Hospital, administered by a committee representative of the various Councils concerned. The accommodation is ample and efficient.

Local Acts :—No Local Acts, special Local Orders, or General Adoptive Acts have been adopted during the year.

Arrangements for Chemical and Bacteriological work :— I have not been able to find any record of the amount done. One report on a case suspected of Diphtheria from the Clinical Research Laboratories, to which swabs are sent, has been found.

Tubercular material is usually examined by the medical practitioner attending the case, or through the County Tuberculosis Officer at "Virol" Laboratories.

HOUSING.

General Housing Conditions in the District :— At the census taken in 1911 there were 553 families or separate occupiers. The number of houses has not changed much since then. About two thirds of the houses are for the working classes. There were no new houses erected during the year, nor are any now in course of erection.

Population :—The estimate given for the district is 2352.

Owing to the closing of camps in the neighbourhood there has been some decrease, but this has been to some extent balanced by the return of many men from military service.

Extent of Shortage of Houses :— There is a serious shortage of houses at present and 30 are required.

There is a scheme at present under consideration for the erection of the required number of houses and it is hoped that the erection of ten or twelve houses will soon be started.

Overcrowding—Extent :—This was serious during the early part of the year owing to the presence of dependents of troops in the camp in the Fairfield and in other camps nearby.

Since the closing of the camps this has become less, but there are still families forced to live in houses too small for them owing to the shortage of houses.

Measures taken or Contemplated to deal with Overcrowding :—Owing to the absence of alternative accommodation it has not been possible to deal with overcrowding. It is hoped that this will be relieved by the building of the new houses referred to above.

Fitness of Houses :—The general standard of housing in the district is only moderate.

General character of the defects found to exist in unfit houses :—These are general want of repair and faulty design, while most of the houses in the town are damp owing to the low-lying situation and to many houses having been affected by floods in past years.

No action appears to have been taken as regards unfit houses under the Public Health Acts or under the Housing Acts.

Difficulties in remedying unfitness :—The absence of alternative accommodation and the difficulties of labour and building materials, together with the fact that many of the houses were sold during the year have made it impossible to take any measures. Many houses have been repaired voluntarily by their owners.

Conditions so far as they affect housing as regards Water Supply, Closet Accommodation, and Refuse Disposal :—These are satisfactory and no measures have had to be taken. It is hoped that a covered cart for the collection of refuse will be obtainable and that covered bins will come into general use. The present method of exposing household refuse in open boxes and old buckets in the streets is not satisfactory.

Unhealthy Areas:—There are none in the district.

Bye-laws relating to houses, to houses let in lodgings, and to tents, vans, sheds, etc.:—There has been no complaint about the working of the present bye-laws and no need for any revision or for any new bye-law.

Statistics for the 12 months ended 31st. December, 1919:—No complaints were made by householders that dwelling houses were unfit for human habitation.

120 houses were inspected ; none were found unfit for human habitation.

12 houses were found with defects which were made fit after preliminary notice.

No action was taken under Section 28 of the Housing Act, 1919.

No action was taken under Closing Orders.

No Demolition Orders were made.

No houses were demolished.

No representations were made about Obstructive Buildings

The only staff engaged consists of the Sanitary Inspector, who is also Surveyor and Inspector of Nuisances.

A. W. K. STRATON.



TABLE I—WILTON URBAN DISTRICT.

Vital Statistics of the Whole District during 1919 and previous years.

Year	Population estimated to middle of year	Births.		Total Deaths Registered in the District.		Transferable Deaths		Nett deaths belonging to the District.		
		Un-corrected number	Nett	Registered in the District.		of Non-residents registered in the District.	of Residents not registered in the District.	Under 1 year of Age		At all Ages.
				Number	Rate			Number	Rate per 1000 Nett Births.	Number
1914	2158	35	35	23	16.1		2	1	28	25
1915	2181	46	42	28	19.2		4	3	71	32
1919	2352	47	49	28	20.8		9	4	81.6	37

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Area of District in acres (land and inland water)	1,615	Total population at all ages	2124	At Census 1911
Total families or separate occupiers		553		

TABLE II—Cases of Infectious Disease notified during the year 1919
in the Wilton Urban District.

Notifiable Diseases	Cases Notified.							
	At all ages.	At ages—Years						
		Under 1	1 to 5	5 to 15	15 to 25	25 to 45	45 to 65	65 and upwards
Diphtheria	5		2	3				
Ophthalmia Neonatorum	1	1						1
Erysipelas	1							
Measles	1					1		
German Measles	4				2	1		1
Pulmonary Tuberculosis	4			1		1	1	1
Totals	16	1	2	4	2	3	1	3

Isolation Hospital—Joint Isolation Hospital at Old Sarum.

TABLE III—Causes of, and Ages at Death during 1919, in the Wilton Urban District [10

CAUSES OF DEATH	Nett Deaths of "Residents" whether occurring within or without the District.								Total deaths whether of "Residents" or "Non-residents" in Institutions in the district.
	All ages.	Under 1 year.	1 and under 2	2 and under 5	5 and under 15	15 and under 25	25 and under 45	45 and under 65	65 and upwards
All Causes { Certified	36	4		2	2	2	2	9	15
{ Uncertified	1							1	
Diphtheria and Croup ...	1			1					
Erysipelas ...	1								
Pulmonary Tuberculosis...	3				1		1	1	
Cancer, malignant disease	4							2	
Organic Heart Disease ..	8						1	1	
Bronchitis ...	2								
Pneumonia (all forms) ..	2	1							
Nephritis&Bright'sDisease	3							2	
Congenital Debility, etc....	2	2							
Violence, apart from Suicide	1								
Other Defined Diseases ..	10	1		1		1	1	3	
Total ...	37	4		2	2	2	2	10	15

TABLE IV—INFANT MORTALITY in Wilton Urban District

1919. Nett Deaths from stated causes at various Ages Under One Year of age

CAUSE OF DEATH.	Under 1 week	1-2 weeks	2-3 week.	Total under 4 weeks	4 weeks & under 3 months	3 and under 6 months	6 and under 9 months	Total Deaths under one year
All causes { Certified Uncertified	2			2	1			4
Pneumonia								1
Congenital Debility	2			2				2
Other Defined Diseases					1			1
Total	2			2	1			4

Nett Births in the year	{	Legitimate	43	Nett Deaths in the year	{	Legitimate infants	4
		Illegitimate	6			Illegitimate infants	—

